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DIGITAL EDITION
SPAWN
TODD MCFARLANE
CARLO BARBERI

SPAWN
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M'FARLANE

THE KING
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WARNING!
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SPAWN

SPAWN'S UNIVERSE 92 21

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PREVIOUSLY IN *SPAWN*

A blackout still encompasses the small town of Montrose after Spawn's battle with a "Vampire turned Kidnapper", but now he has even more company, lurking in the dark.

image

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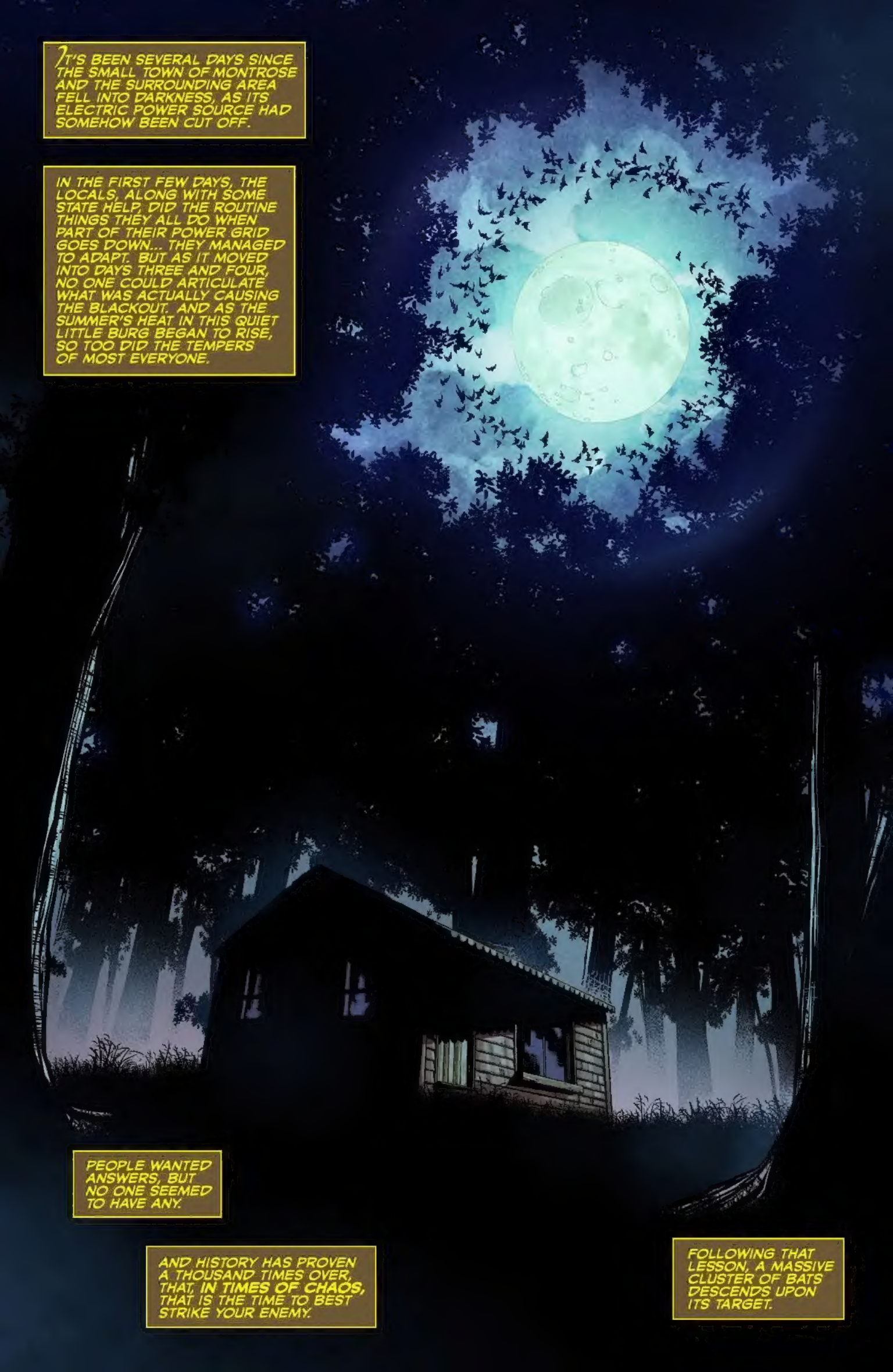

It's been several days since the small town of Montrose and the surrounding area fell into darkness, as its electric power source had somehow been cut off.
In the first few days, the locals, along with some state help, did the routine things they all do when part of their power grid goes down... they managed to adapt. But as it moved into days three and four, no one could articulate what was actually causing the blackout. And as the summer's heat in this quiet little burg began to rise, so too did the tempers of most everyone.
People wanted answers, but no one seemed to have any.
And history has proven a thousand times over, that, in times of chaos, that is the time to best strike your enemy.
Following that lesson, a massive cluster of bats descends upon its target.

EACH BLACK CREATURE THEN COMBINES WITH MANY OTHERS, BEGINNING TO TRANSFORM, AS THEY NEAR THE GROUND.
CONSOLIDATING THEN 'FORM SHIFTING.' IT ISN'T SOMETHING NEW AS MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN DOING THIS FOR CENTURIES. TURNING FROM ANIMAL TO HUMAN FORM WITH EFFORTLESS EASE.
ALL OF YOU, STAY HERE. I'LL SIGNAL IF I NEED YOU TO COME.
WITHIN MINUTES THE CABIN IS OVERRUN WITH DOZENS AND DOZENS OF THE VAMPIRE CARTEL.
AND LIKE ALL GROUPS SEEKING TO ASSERT INFLUENCE AND POWER, THEY HAVE A LEADER. THE LEADER IN THIS CASE IS CALLED: REBIRTH!

THOUGH HE HEARS THEIR GRUNTS OF DISSATISFACTION, THEY OBEY AS HE ENTERS THE TINY DWELLING.
NO SENSE HIDING... I KNOW YOU'RE HERE.
PLUS, I SMELL YOUR VICTIM'S BLOOD.
HIS DEMAND IS ONLY MET WITH SILENCE AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TO ORIGIN OF THAT SMELL.
BUT, WHEN HE OPENS THE BASEMENT DOOR...
IS THAT HOW YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY THIS? WITH CHEAP PARLOR TRICKS, YOU'RE BETTER THAN THAT.

WHY'RE YOU HERE?
YOU KNOW WHY.
FOR THE SAME REASON YOU ARE... TO SURVIVE. ISN'T THAT WHAT THIS WAR IS ABOUT, FOR US TO OUTSMART-- *OUTLIVE*--OUR ENEMIES?
AND JUST WHO ARE *OUR* ENEMIES?
I'M SENSING SARCASM IN YOUR VOICE.
YOU THINK?
WHY? BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE YOU'RE BETTER, THAT YOU AND I ARE SOMEHOW DIFFERENT? THAT WE CAN'T HAVE A COMMON PURPOSE? YOU'RE WRONG.
THEY'RE TRYING TO ISOLATE YOU, PUSHING YOU AWAY FROM POSSIBLE ALLIES. HEAVEN AND HELL LIKE IT WHEN WE'RE OUT ON OUR OWN. THAT'S BETTER FOR THEM DURING THEIR CONSTANT POWER GRABS.
YOU SEEM TO WANT TO PLAY INTO THEIR HANDS. I'M HERE TO *OFFER* A BETTER OPTION.

BE SKEPTICAL, THAT'S FINE, JUST HEAR ME OUT.
I BELIEVE THERE'S AN ALLIANCE TO BE HAD BETWEEN US, AND IF YOU'RE NOT COMFORTABLE LATER ON, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO STAY PERMANENT. BUT IF THEY SEE A GROWING RESISTANCE, AT THE VERY LEAST THEY'LL HAVE TO CHANGE THEIR TACTICS. AND THAT'S WHEN THEY BECOME SUSCEPTIBLE.
YOU SEE, I'M GETTING TIRED OF THEIR BULLSHIT, BECAUSE BOTH THINK I'M LOYAL TO THE OTHER SIDE. HEAVEN DOESN'T QUITE TRUST MY GROUP'S BLOOD-LINE BEING TIED TO HELL, AND HELL HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE D.N.A. WE SHARE WITH HUMANS.
THAT MAKES US DISTRUSTED AND OUTCASTS ON BOTH SIDES. WE'RE ESSENTIALLY LIVING OUR OWN PURGATORY. AND THAT DOESN'T EVEN MENTION THE INFIGHTING AMONG OUR VAMPIRE FACTIONS. JUST ASK YOUR FRIEND, BLUDD, WHAT HE THINKS OF US.
I'M NOT INTERESTED.
THOUGHT THAT'D BE YOUR ATTITUDE, BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM YOUR VAMPIRIC GENES. THEY'VE BEEN A PIECE OF EVERY HELLSPAWN. THAT KIND OF MAKES US BROTHERS.

BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE... I'M THE BIGGER BROTHER HERE!
WITH A SLIGHT GESTURE, REBIRTH WAVES TOWARDS SPAWN WHO SUDDENLY LURCHES BACK LIKE HE'S BEEN SHOT. INSTANTLY, HE FEELS HIS CHEST CONTRACT AS HIS BREATHING TURNS SHALLOW.
SHOCKINGLY, FOR SOME-ONE WITHOUT HUMAN LUNGS, SPAWN FINDS HE'S STRUGGLING TO BREATHE!
YOU'RE STILL WEAK, SPAWN, SO STOP PRETENDING. I GET HOW YOU COULD TAKE OUT ONE OF THEIR LOW-LEVEL AGENTS.* THAT'S NOT US.
*Last issue -- Todd
WE'VE BEEN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE CURRENT SITUATION YOU CREATED-- MY ARMY THANKS YOU.

SO, IMAGINE HOW WE'VE CAPITALIZED ON THAT OPPORTUNITY. HAVING THE COVER OF DARK FOR DAYS!? IT'S BEEN A FEAST!
EVERYWHERE HUMANS WENT, WE WERE WAITING.
SADLY, A BUNCH DIDN'T SURVIVE, THAT WILL DRAW ATTENTION. FORTUNATELY, IT'LL TAKE A WHILE. NEWS ISN'T TRAVELLING QUITE AS FAST AS USUAL.
NOT ONLY DID YOU KNOCK THE ELECTRICITY OUT, YOU INADVERTENTLY BLOCKED ANY POWER SOURCE FROM PENETRATING.
CELL PHONES, GENERATORS, BATTERY PACKS, THE INTERNET, IT'S ALL USELESS RIGHT NOW.
THE OUTSIDERS KEEP HAVING TO LEARN THAT LESSON.

WHOOMP
SO, I'LL ASK AGAIN...
CAN I COUNT ON YOU?
SNAP
THE VAMPIRE LEADER LIFTS A NEARBY SOFA FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST AS A SHOW OF HIS PHYSICAL PROWESS, THEN SECOND BECAUSE HE NEEDS SOMETHING FROM IT

IF YOU THINK I'M TAKING PLEASURE IN THIS DISCUSSION, I'M NOT. WHAT I'M TRYING TO GET ACROSS IS WE NEED EACH OTHER. MY BOSS, HE'S BEEN PAYING ATTENTION, HE'S AWARE YOU'VE SEALED ALL THE 'DEAD ZONES' ON THE GLOBE.
WHICH WILL BRING THE WRATH OF EVERY ONE OF YOUR ENEMIES WHO WANTS TO LEAVE EARTH.
YOU CAN'T DEFEAT ALL OF THEM. MAYBE FOR A WHILE, BUT NOT FOREVER, EVENTUALLY YOU'LL MAKE A MISTAKE, OR THEY'LL CATCH YOU OFF GUARD, THEN WHAT, YOU RETURN BACK TO HELL WITH YOUR TAIL BETWEEN YOUR LEGS?
YOU DON'T WANT THAT.
SO, THINK ABOUT IT IN PRACTICAL TERMS. WE CAN HELP GIVE YOU PROTECTION.

FOR HOW LONG?
UNTIL IT'S NO LONGER MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.
HERE'S YOUR MISTAKE, WE MAY SHARE SOME BLOODLINE, BUT I'LL NEVER TRUST YOUR KIND.
WRONG ANSWER!
THUK
ARGH!!!

I TRIED, REALLY I HAVE, TO BE AS REASONABLE AS I CAN. BUT WHAT CAN I DO IF YOU'RE SO DETERMINED TO SELF-INFLICT YOUR OWN DEFEAT? THERE'S SIMPLY TOO MANY ENEMIES FOR YOU TO SURVIVE.
AND UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE YOU'LL JOIN THEM IN A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS.
SO...
I CAN'T LET YOU LEAVE HERE.
SHUP
SURELY, WE CAN AT LEAST AGREE UPON *THAT?*

YOU'RE RIGHT, I DON'T HAVE MY FULL POWERS BACK, BUT...
I'VE GOT ENOUGH!
SPAWN IS NON-RESPONSIVE. HE CLOSES HIS EYES. WHEN THEY OPEN AGAIN, HIS ENTIRE BODY IS SHUDDERING
AS HE WILLS HIMSELF TO SLOWLY GET TO HIS FEET, THE VIBRATION FROM HIS BODY EXPANDS TO THE FLOOR
REBIRTH INSTINCTIVELY TAKES A STEP BACK, UNSURE OF EXACTLY WHAT'S TRANSPIRING
THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE IS NOW SHAKING, LIKE SOME SUDDEN EARTHQUAKE HAS BEGUN. THE GROUND ITSELF TREMBLES WITH AN INTENSITY THAT KNOCKS SOME OF THE UNDEAD OFF THEIR BALANCE

AS THE TREMORS CREST, IN DOZENS OF PLACES, THE GROUND EXPLODES, EXPOSING ROTTING LIMBS THAT CLAW THEIR WAY TO THE SURFACE
UNNERVING THOSE THAT MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THEY WERE SOMEHOW A UNIQUE BREED
THE WORD "UNDEAD" DESCRIBES MANY OFFSPRING FROM HELL, SOME VASTLY MORE INTELLIGENT THAN OTHERS, BUT ALL WITH A DEEP RESERVOIR FOR EVIL
AND LIKE THE VAMPIRES, THEY TOO HAVE A LEADER THEY SERVE

THEN SUDDENLY EVERYTHING STOPS SHAKING GROWLS OF THINGS INHUMAN ARE ALL THAT CAN BE HEARD NOW
I'M NOT THE ONE NEEDING PROTECTION.
WHAT DID YOU DO? CALL WILD ANIMALS TO COME AID YOU? YOU'RE ALREADY HURT, THEY'VE COME TOO LATE TO PROTECT YOU.
A SMIRK CROSSES SPAWN'S FACE AS REBIRTH REALIZES HE DOESN'T LIKE WHAT THAT MIGHT MEAN. AS HE RUSHES TO GO OUTSIDE SPAWN JUST TO PISS HIM OFF SEALS THE DOOR
IT'S A MOMENTARY STALL TACTIC BUT SPAWN'S SMILE BROADENS WIDER
NO.
THIS CAN'T BE.
SMASH

MOONLIGHT GIVES JUST ENOUGH LIGHT FOR REBIRTH TO SURVEY THE SITUATION. HIS WARRIORS ARE FACING A GROUP OF ZOMBIES SO LARGE AS TO DWARF THE VAMPIRES HE HAD BROUGHT WITH HIM. FOR EVERY ONE VAMPIRE, THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE DECAYED CORPSES.
SOME HAVE EVEN BEGUN TO FLANK THE SIDES, AND SO HAVE BEGUN CUTTING REBIRTH OFF FROM HIS OWN SUPPORT.
AND THE LEADER OF THE VAMPIRES KNOWS THAT WHATEVER CHOICE HE MAKES NEXT, WHATEVER COMMAND HE GIVES, IT HAD BETTER BE THE RIGHT ONE. IF IT ISN'T, HE'LL LOSE THE CONFIDENCE OF HIS TRIBE FOREVER.
AND THAT'S ONLY IF THEY SURVIVE.

THE DEAD... I CAN RAISE THEM. YOUR BOSS, DIDN'T HE TELL YOU THAT?
HE SAID YOU'D CHANGED, IT'S WHY HE THOUGHT WE SHOULD JOIN ARMS.
TO HARNESS OUR POWERS AGAINST GOD AND SATAN. NOT BECAUSE YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT US, BUT BECAUSE YOU CARE ABOUT HUMANS.
YOU HAVE A SHOT AT KEEPING THIS PLANET SAFE, OF ELIMINATING THOSE WHO'LL HARM HUMANS. YOU KNOW THE STAKES AS WELL AS I DO.
RATIONALIZE IT ANY WAY YOU WANT, WE DON'T CARE, BUT THIS WAR ISN'T GOING AWAY WHATEVER YOU DECIDE.
BUT THIS, ALL THIS, IS JUST A SMALL TASTE. COMBINED, THINK WHAT OUR ARMIES WOULD LOOK LIKE!

SPAWN HAS THOUGHT ABOUT IT, AND SINCE HE'S BEEN PART OF THIS WAR FOR SO LONG, THERE'RE ONLY A COUPLE OF RULES THAT HAVE SERVED HIM WELL. NUMBER ONE IS NEVER TRUST ANYONE... THEY ALL HAVE AGENDAS.
PAKT
AND TWO ALWAYS, REGARDLESS OF YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH, MAKE THEM FEAR YOU!
OUR LEADER! ATTACK, NOW!
HE PLANS TO EMPHASIZE THAT SECOND RULE.

THEY CAN'T. NOT UNLESS THEY WANT TO CLEAVE THROUGH A WALL OF RABID MONSTERS TO GET THERE
TELL YOUR MASTER, IF HE WANTS TO NEGOTIATE, TO COME FACE ME HIMSELF!

NOT SEND ONE OF HIS DAMNED LAPDOGS.
WITH THAT, SPAWN BENDS OVER AND BEGINS TO SAW, USING THE SPIKED EDGES OF HIS FOREARM GAUNTLET. THE CRACKING AND OOZING OF BODILY LIQUIDS AND BONES ARE SLICED THROUGH IN MERE SECONDS.

AND TELL HIM...

...I'LL DO THIS TO EACH ONE OF YOU IF HE EVER SENDS YOU MY WAY AGAIN!

HE THEN SIGNALS TO THE HEADLESS BODY LETTING HIS HORDE KNOW IT'S TIME TO FEED
ALONE! THAT'S HOW I'LL MEET YOUR MASTER. AND WHOEVER HE IS, TELL THE COWARD I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE INTRODUCTION.
DELIVER THAT MESSAGE!
THE STANDOFF LASTS BUT A MINUTE LONGER BEFORE THE NIGHTWALKERS SEPARATE AND TRANSFORM BACK INTO BATS AS THEY QUICKLY DISAPPEAR INTO THE NIGHT SKY.
OUR CLOAKED HERO TAKES ONE LAST GLANCE AT THE BRUTALIZED REMAINS OF HIS ENEMY BEFORE FADING INTO DARK SHADOWS.

HE DELIVERED, WITH CONFIDENCE AND POISE, HIS MESSAGE OF FEAR. AND BY THE LOOK IN THEIR EYES, THEY'LL NEVER RETURN.
BUT WHAT ABOUT NEXT TIME, HE WONDERS? WILL HIS ACT STILL WORK ON THE NEXT ROUND OF ENEMIES?
BECAUSE FOR ALL HIS GRANDSTANDING, HE ACTUALLY IS HURT, AND IT TOOK EVERYTHING HE HAD TO KEEP HIMSELF FROM PASSING OUT IN FRONT OF THEM. SO, WHAT IF THE NEXT ONES SEE THROUGH HIS ACT? IF THEY DON'T FALL FOR HIS BLUFF?
HOW LONG?
HOW LONG CAN HE KEEP THIS PACE UP?

1:3:3:1

SPAWNING GROUND

PRESENTS:

THE BREAKDOWN

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Regards, I am looking forward to reading THE SCORCHED. I love all the characters, and I want more from She-Spawn, Redeemer, GUNSLINGER, MEDIEVAL SPAWN. Can we see more of the character Haunt? I also really like Redeemer, his design is incredible, but I have a question: is this Redeemer Eddie Frank, or is he a new character? I think I remember that in Spawn # 300 Eddie Frank was transformed into Reaper, so the current Redeemer must be a new character, or are Reaper and Redeemer the same character? Any chance of getting new Sam & Twitch toys? What about She Spawn? I would love a She Spawn figure, thank you.
– Francisco R.

King Spawn 1 by STEPHEN SEGOVIA

The Scorched 1 cover by **GREG CAPULLO**

Ok, there is a lot to unpack here. I am glad you are looking forward to The Scorched. We are very excited to get it into your hands. More Haunt? Stay tuned! Reaper and Redeemer? Yeah… that is kind of weird, isn't it? We love toys & there is lots of cool new stuff coming your way!

I just wanted to say that Spawn is an amazing character
- Kieron W.

I agree!

King Spawn 1 cover by **PUPPETEER LEE**

Hey Mr. McFarlane, I just wanted to give you a super short message. I loved Issue 1 of King Spawn! Amazing artwork, and the story already sucked me in! I had no idea Gunslinger was coming out in October, I will be supporting that too! You're one of the greatest for sure and keep up the awesome work! Never change man!
– Ruben N.

Glad to hear that you liked King Spawn #1. Javi's art on the interiors is pretty spectacular. Just wait until you see Brett Booth's art on Gunslinger!

Spawn 321 by **CARLO BARBERI**

Are you guys bringing back Cyan with her powers?
– Jon F.

Cyan has a very special place in our hearts and will play an important part in Spawn's future. Keep reading.

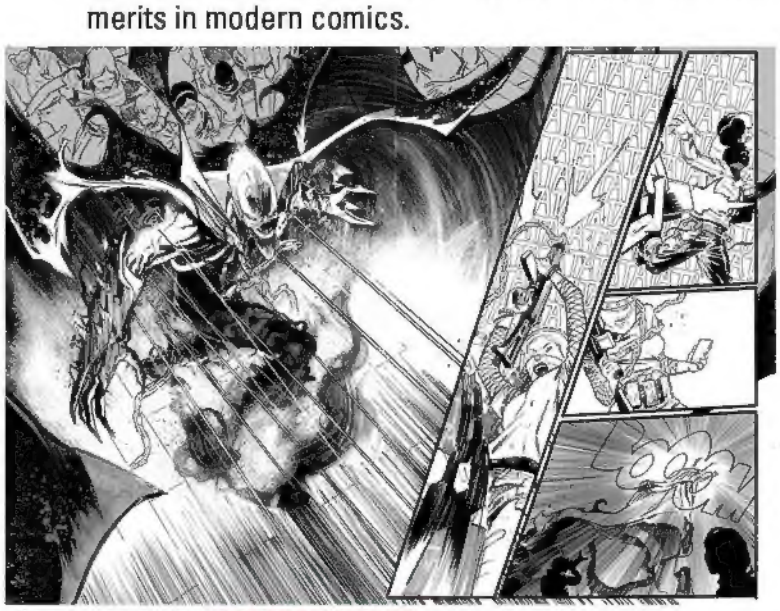
Hello Spawning Ground! I find it amazing that Spawn maintains its $2.99 cover price. How has this series managed to hold this price point while almost all other comics and companies price their issues at $3.99 and now $4.99? Will this continue into the near future, even with the fantastic new cover upgrade?
- Jeff H.

Spawn 279 Cover by
JASON SHAWN ALEXANDER

To be honest, Jeff, it's not always easy. But we feel that if we have the ability to deliver an awesome Comic at that price, along with the, as you stated, "fantastic new cover upgrade," then we are going to continue to do so.

Are the Spawn books all done digitally now, or is it still pencil and ink?
– David S.

It is a combination of the 2, actually. If you follow King Spawn Artist Javi Fernandez on social media, you can see that he still works traditionally for the most part. In contrast, Carlo Barberi, the Artist of the main Spawn title, works almost all digitally. Both have their merits in modern comics.



King Spawn 2 by **JAVI FERNANDEZ**

Do you have a question for Todd about Spawn? If so, e-mail it to us at:
spawninggground@mcfarlane.com

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THE SCORCHED

DECEMBER 2021

SPAWN® 324

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